



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**The Assistant Secretary for Communications**  
**and Information**  
Washington, D.C. 20230

APR 26 2010

The Honorable Nydia Velázquez  
Chairwoman  
Congressional Hispanic Caucus  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Velázquez:

Thank you for your letter requesting that the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) update its 1993 report on the role of telecommunications in the dissemination of speech that may encourage or advocate the occurrence of hate crimes. I share your concern about the potential for electronic media to encourage hate crimes and spread messages of hate. I, too, am appalled by the events recounted in your letter.

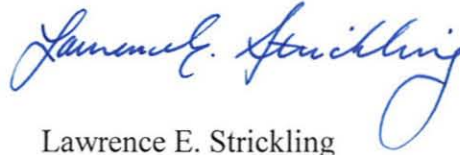
Technological advances since NTIA's last report have contributed significantly to the expansion of our communications media platforms. While this growth has fostered greater content diversity for consumers and has provided outlets for new and inclusive voices, it also has created opportunities for those who traffic in hate and division. The dissemination of hate speech via either traditional or new media is a matter of great concern. For that reason, I am pleased that Congress recently directed the Department of Justice's National Institute of Justice to evaluate trends in hate crimes against Hispanic-Americans and other designated groups and "to assess the underlying causes behind any increases in hate crimes against such groups." H. Conf. Rep. No.111-366, at 679 (2010).

Hate speech, however distributed, could have debilitating effect on children in particular. To advance consideration of such concerns, the National Hispanic Media Coalition and other organizations gave presentations on the subject at the September 24 meeting of the Online Safety and Technology Working Group. Pursuant to the "Protecting Children in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act," P.L. 110-385, the working group is charged with evaluating industry efforts and formulating recommendations to promote online safety for children through education, labeling, and parental control technology. The working group will submit a report to Congress and to NTIA in June 2010 with findings and recommendations. I have encouraged the working group to examine the effects that hate speech on our media platforms has on children. I anticipate that its final report will present a framework for addressing the general problem of undesirable online content, which for all parties concerned will serve as a guide for addressing specific issues, such as hate speech.

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I commend you for your commitment to raising awareness about and finding solutions to hate crimes. I look forward to working with you on this matter in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Lawrence E. Strickling". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping "S" at the end.

Lawrence E. Strickling